
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract: The making of the Constitution brought the women legal equality. Though the constitutional provisions allowed the women to leave the relative clam of the domestic sphere to enter the male-dominated political sphere, the involvement of women in politics has been low key. This article enumerates the factors the factors which have resulted in a wide chasm between the 'dejure' and 'defacto' status of political participation is a complex phenomenon, which can be comprehended by analyzing several factors. This can be achieved not just by increasing the numbers but by ensuring that rural women leaders perceive the problems and effectively resolve the issues.

Introduction: India stands all among the democracies of the world, an old nation but a comparatively young state, with a constitution that incorporates the best features of various constitution of the world. The Indian republic had started its journey with the ideals of liberty, Equality and justices, making the Indian women feel secure with promises of survival, equal treatment and gender justice. Their dream of being equal citizens, however, remains unfulfilled even today. The progressive vision of the constitution has proved inadequate in addressing the complexities of gender discrimination.

In the present times there is a growing consciousness to recognize women's autonomy, and their capacity to act full citizens. Their role in the social, political and economic context need to recognise in the right earnest and the forces that keep the women away from the main scene need to be countered. Rural Women can be effective change agents and important contributors to the nation development. Their status can be-co-related to their participating rights and obligations in managing society. The significant indicators of the status of Rural women in any society are political participation, representation and share in decision-making bodies. The representation of women is considered important both for normative and practical reasons viewed from the normative perspective, the interest of all the citizen should be represented by the political elite. If Rural women are not included in the practically, it may lead to the allocation of resources and decisions which may not be in the interest of women.

In the modern state the rural women have become necessarily linked with the state. The rise of nuclear family and the progressive break down of the joint-families has led to a decline in the control over women. The state has entered those spheres which were once controlled by the practical family.

The making of the Indian constitution brought the women legal equality. Constitutional provisions and legislative securities subsequently led the women to leave the relative clam of private life and enter both elective and appointive public offices in unprecedented numbers. India has the distinction of having had a lady prime minister, President for nearly years and several women chief ministers and governors at the state level. The celebration of the year of Empowerment of women, the reservation of 50% seats for women in the

panchayats(local government- Gramapanchayath, Talukpanchayat, zillapanchayt and municipal council's) and a proposal for a similar reservation in the parliament all raised hopes for the betterment of women. However, this was only an illusion, which camouflaged reality.

In general, the involvement of Rural women in politics has been low key. They from part of the syndrome of exclusion effects, in Electrol politics as political as political wives, party loyalists and voters. in political decision-making their status has been subordinate to that of men. Only a small section of rural women belonging to or supported by affluent and influential families have managed to entered the political mainstream. With respect to this Anuradha Bhoite has commented on the wide chasm between 'dejure'and 'defacto' perspective. The fundamental right of equality (enshrined in articles 14 to 18)and equal right to vote to men and women-bring women at part with men in the legal or 'dejure' sense. They caste their vote and take part in agitation political activities but lag behind in enjoy position of power and decision of power and decision making. Thus, in the 'defacto' sense they are far below their male counterparts.

The conventional political activities include voting , campaigning in elections , convincing other person to vote in a particular manner , attending public meetings disturbing party literature, joining a party , contributing money to a party, contesting elections and holding public or party office. In the present times , the term political participation has been broadened to include such activities as strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, mass movements, marches, presentation of memoranda as well as violent acts designed to change the political system , or the unconventional political activities. They are lees likely to take interest in politics to discuss politics, to attend public meetings and to influence Decision, unfortunately, in India , politics has been associated with unhealthy Compitation , display of pshyca strength , greed strugal for the excise of authority .In this perspective, Rural women have been socialized to be live that politics in a 'Mail domain' , 'a Durty game'. They prefer not to associate them sells with this field Family and child- care Responsibilities lead to road conflicts during the youth. The Rural women who are keen on persuing a carrier in politics enter the political sphere at a later age when they have

full filled their responsibilities towards the family. However, this creates a grater problem for then as they have to devote more energy and strugal hard in order to compite with the men who have made an early start. Thus, political equality can only the achived if the socialization.

In the political sphere, a wide gender gap is seen in voting as well as contestation. This is circumscribed by many vital factors in the political environment. The nature of the state, its stage of development, mode of production, overall political situation, type of electoral system, ect. Or contextual factors that control the participation of common people in politics.

The Rural women are more susceptible to this factors . It is generally accepted that the Implementation of a proportional representation system, rather then a plurality- majority system. Helps women in achieving success. The system is more responsive and attempts to co relate the number of seats won by a political party. with the number of votes caste for that party. This system makes use of multi- member constituencies un like the Indian system for the composition of Lok sabha and the state assemblies, where their are single member constituencies. If the list system is adopted the parties wood feel obliged to include women in their lists in order to balance their tickets across genders.

Besides the electoral system, the over all political atmosphere in the country discourages women from participating in politics, in India the ruling elite as under mind the normal functioning of government and other public institutions. This discourages all citizens, but the women are especially affected by it. Women have relatively less ability to use money, muscle power and other forms of influence in the public sphere. Criminalization of politics and the rising tide of violence have further discouraged women. This exposure of Indian women to grater in security , corruption, and criminalization as resulted in their a version for the political seen .The political seen in India is dominated by political parties, which or the primary organizations through in which citizens contest elections . be fore the elections the parties put fourth their principals in their manifestoes , indicating their policy perspectives .The manifestos of all political parties contain promises of taking up programmes of women.

Gender gap is witnessed even in contestations. Political parties have always reluctant to give tickets to women .They prefer to give tickets to the male candidates. the parties or usually against taking a risk of putting up women as candidates because of the social attitudes which this fever women's entry in to politics . unless it is a reserve seat they prefer that women only support and do not context. A large number of women try their luck as independent candidates , after being denied a ticket by the parties. They are Rarely success full because the entire game of power is operated through parties. An independent candidate stands on a weaker platform. It

needs to be remember that our political system works through political parties if women wants to share power , they have to make a place for them selves with the political parties .The experience of over sixty five years shows the inability of parties to make a place for the women . even the presence of women does not result in any significant changes in either the nature of women's functioning or in the party approach to women and women's issues. It is also possible that at present, the number of women politicians is small. Hence their have to toe the lines of dominating male members to get a grater share of decision making in the future.

It is noted in various counties of the world that women have not been very successful in the political field at the world level only ten percent of the parliamentary positions and six percent of the cabinet ministerial positions or occupied by women. only a few countries , like Sweden , Norway, Finland and Denmark have crossed 30% representation of women in the parliament. What is disappointing about India is that it has taken 'back word term'.

Though this is largely blamed on Illiteracy, the lack of accessibility to the electoral machinery is chiefly due to the cumbersome procedure of voting . at times on has to face several problems to get one's name added to the electoral. Some of the common problems or lack of proper publicity of program of revision, in ability of women to complete the formalities, indifference of the Enumerator or his personal prejudices of caste , religion , sex ect . At times the political parties do not take sufficient interest unless their own supporters are involved.

Thus, women remain at the periphery of the power structure the lack the political consciousness needed to formulate and implement policies in accordance with the aspiration of women .Their presence is a mare 'symbolism rather them real power wielding'. A successful democracy requires a participant society which power is share and authoritative decisions are made by representatives of all the citizens. Indian democracy, unfortunately, lacks the effective participation of all its citizens.

Conclusion: To strengthen the position of women in society equal participation of men and women is required. This is not only a demand of demand of simple justice or democracy, but a necessary condition for human existence. The entry of women into politics and decision-making structures can change the policies, vision and structure of Institution. They could redefine political priorities, and place new items on the political agenda to address gender specific concerns and provide a new perspective on main stream political issues. Women have long been overlooked in the process of Development. Change can only come, development can only takes place when women are given decision-making roles.

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